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Readers interested in learning about the submarine debate are referred to the *New York Times* article of 5 October 1980 by Richard Burt: "Brown admits aides distorted MX issue: Pentagon sought to push missiles by exaggerating Soviet gains against U.S. submarines."—ELIOT MARSHALL

## Science Funding in West Germany

In his recent letter about the federal government's role in basic research (16 Jan., p. 226), Senator Harrison Schmitt takes issue with Milton Friedman's concern about academic freedom being inhibited by excessive federal support of basic science. Senator Schmitt states that during the last decades, due to a drastic reduction in the proportion of private research funds relative to federal funds, the direction of such research has been channeled and prostituted in many instances.

A balance between government and private funding of research is important, but establishing exactly what that balance should be is very difficult and indeed depends on the science system being considered. In the Federal Republic of Germany, support for basic science depends almost exclusively on government funds. Out of a total of approximately \$2.7 billion spent by German universities on research in 1978, only \$50 million came from private sources, mostly from industry. A similar situation prevails in nonuniversity research institutions doing basic research. In spite of this seeming imbalance, there is no serious inhibition of academic freedom in my country. This may be partly due to the policy of the government to support basic research predominantly by financing the budgets of a few large, independent, scientific funding organizations, such as the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (the equivalent of the National Science Foundation, but without organizational ties to the government) and the Max-Planck Society. There is little government interference in the process of distributing these funds to research institutes and individual researchers.

The German scientific community is highly sensitized to any threats to this independence from the government. Also, the Max-Planck Society stresses the importance of the existence of some—very limited—private funds they can use without having to give an accounting to the government. Similar views are maintained by researchers from academic institutions.

These views probably reflect an emphasis on the principle of pluralistic sources for basic research more than a recognition of the monetary contribution private funds make in this area of science and technology. Nevertheless, private institutions continue to have an important complementary role in encouraging and supporting scientific research in fields which, for one reason or another, do not meet the requirements for funding or are not sufficiently supported by large funding institutions.

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## U.S.-Soviet Relations

No action on the part of American scientists affecting cooperation with their Soviet colleagues could be justified which increases the chances of nuclear confrontation with the Soviet Union. This far—but this far only—we are in agreement with William Carey (Editorial, 24 Oct. 1980, p. 383). In advocating resumption of U.S.-U.S.S.R. scientific exchanges and meaningful cooperation between U.S. and Soviet scientists, Carey appears to misunderstand the purposes and effectiveness of efforts like the moratorium on professional cooperation with Soviet scientists advocated by Scientists for Sakharov, Orlov, and Shcharansky (SOS). His editorial misrepresents the position of "leaders in science" in the United States on such actions.

At a press conference in Washington, D.C., on 16 October in which the five of us participated, we made it clear, as does the SOS pledge signed by 7900 scientists from 44 countries (including 33 Nobel laureates, 187 members of the National Academy of Sciences, and 82 fellows of the Royal Society), that such activities do not prevent and are not intended to prevent contacts between U.S. and Soviet scientists on such matters as arms limitation or other aspects of world peace. We are aware that such contacts played an important role in the test ban treaty and, while we doubt that scientists can play an effective role in ameliorating the current U.S.-Soviet impasse, we would support any actions by scientists in the search for peace and disarmament.

It is our firm belief that the moratorium advocated by SOS and, more generally, the sharp reduction in Soviet-U.S. exchanges, which have been valuable to us as well as to the Soviets, not only do not bring us any closer to the confronta-